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REPORT DATE: June 20FF

TYPE OF REPORT: Annual

PREPARED FOR: U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command  
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

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| <b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>   |                         |                                 |   | <i>Form Approved</i><br><b>OMB No. 0704-0188</b>                |   |
| <small>Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. <b>PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.</b></small> |                         |                                 |   |   |   |
| <b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b><br>01-06-2011   |                         | <b>2. REPORT TYPE</b><br>Annual |   | <b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b><br>1 JUN 2010 - 31 MAY 2011 |   |
| <b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b><br><br>Randomized Controlled Equivalence Trial Comparing Videoconference and Face-to-Face Delivery of Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD   |                         |                                 |   | <b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>                                      |   |
|  |                         |                                 |   | <b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b><br>W81XWH-08-2-0130                     |   |
|  |                         |                                 |   | <b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>                               |   |
| <b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b><br><br>Tracey Smith<br><br>E-Mail: traceysmith@wisc.edu  |                         |                                 |   | <b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>                                       |   |
|  |                         |                                 |   | <b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>  |   |
|  |                         |                                 |   | <b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>                                     |   |
| <b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b><br><br>University of Wisconsin<br>Madison, WI 53706  |                         |                                 |   | <b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>                 |   |
| <b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b><br>U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command<br>Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012   |                         |                                 |   | <b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>                         |   |
|  |                         |                                 |   | <b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>                   |   |
| <b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b><br>Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited  |                         |                                 |   |   |   |
| <b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>   |                         |                                 |   |   |   |
| <b>14. ABSTRACT</b><br><br>No abstract provided.   |                         |                                 |   |   |   |
| <b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b><br><br>No subject terms provided.   |                         |                                 |   |   |   |
| <b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>   |                         |                                 | <b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b><br><br>UU | <b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b><br><br>4                             | <b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b><br>USAMRMC |
| <b>a. REPORT</b><br>U  | <b>b. ABSTRACT</b><br>U | <b>c. THIS PAGE</b><br>U        |   |   | <b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b>  |

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## **Introduction**

The proposed study seeks to address the problems that some veterans and service personnel have when trying to access appropriate health care for PTSD. One way to improve access to this care is to deliver the treatment over a video conferencing system (referred to as telemental health or TMH) so that personnel in geographically underserved areas can be treated by clinicians with specialized training. Specifically we will be comparing the efficacy of Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) when provided in traditional face-to-face (FTF) vs. via TMH. The study will compare these modalities of treatment among OEF/OIF veterans who have developed PTSD secondary to their military trauma. The treatment will directly help the veterans by providing education and skills-building to help them process their reactions to their traumas and decrease the experience of PTSD symptoms. This study has a unique component of having an accompanying website which allows the veterans in the TMH condition to complete their therapy assignments in a secure online environment.

## **Body**

The study is well underway and currently we have randomized 36 veterans – 8 to the TMH condition and 8 to the FTF condition. Five people are currently active in treatment. Of these 24 were randomized from Hines VA and 12 from the Madison VA. At Hines 121 patients have been screened and at Madison 35 have been screened. We are meeting with a variety of clinical teams at the Madison VA to increase enrollment. There have been no complaints about the study by Veterans.

An on-going issue has been finding OEF/OIF vets who have the time to commit to coming to the study visits since after the baseline assessment; they need to come twice a week for 6 weeks. Veterans have stated that paying for gasoline has been an issue so given the surplus in our remaining budget we are going to increase the subject payments in order to assist with travel costs. Since many of these Veterans have young families, work and go to school; coming in twice a week has been difficult. We have been meeting with teams in a variety of clinics across the VA to improve our recruitment and retention.

## **Key Research Accomplishments**

Trial is ongoing so we do not have accomplishments to report other than we continue to make progress as outlined on our Statement of Work.

## **Reportable Outcomes**

There are no reportable outcomes at this time.

**Conclusion**

The study is well underway and we have made decent progress in terms of enrolling participants. This continues to be a challenge and is consistent with what other study teams who are treating PTSD with OEF/OIF are reporting (e.g., Gros, Yoder, Tuerk, Lozano, & Acierno, 2011). Recruitment remains a critical focus for both study teams. Given we have 15 more months we are hopeful that we will reach our recruitment goals.

**References**

Gros, D.F., Yoder, M., Tuerk, P. W., Lozano, B. E. & Acierno, R. (2011). Exposure Therapy for PTSD Delivered to Veterans via Telehealth: Predictors of Treatment Completion and Outcome and Comparison to Treatment Delivered in Person. *Behavior Therapy*, 42, 276–283.

**Appendices**

None